

## Accessibility

### Web Content Accessibility

We believe the California State Portal satisfies all Priority 1, 2, and 3 guidelines, for "AAA" compliance of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0. In addition, the California Portal satisfies **Section 508**, Subpart B, Subsection 1194.22, Guidelines A-P of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as revised in 1998. The State of California is strongly committed to improved accessibility for all Californians.

The State of California accepts no responsibility for the content or accessibility of the external websites or external documents linked to on this website.

### Background

As directed by Executive Order D-17-00 issued on September 8, 2000, a comprehensive eGovernment initiative was launched that requires every agency and department to adhere to technical standards for accessible Web design and compatibility. The Accessibility Guide enables the State to utilize the best tools and design available to ensure that the content of the new California portal can be reached by the widest possible audience regardless of disability, limitations of computer equipment or use of alternate Internet access devices.

In addition, State accessibility guidelines enable agencies to meet State and Federal statutory requirements prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities in the design of both Internet and Intranet web sites. For example, California Government Code Section 11135 et seq. prohibits discrimination by entities receiving funding from the State of California.

Likewise, Federal requirements mandating access for persons with disabilities were first imposed on State recipients of Federal funding by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Today there are numerous Federal statutes and regulations extending civil rights protections to persons with disabilities, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as well as the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, where specific technical requirements for accessible web design have been published by the U.S. Access Board. This is important since Title II of the ADA recognizes the importance of communication and the necessity of the State of California to take appropriate steps to ensure that communications with persons with disabilities are as effective as communications with others.

Between 17% and 19% of United States citizens have some level of disability. In fact, about 1 out of 5 Americans have some form of disability and 1 in 10 have a severe disability. These 1997 statistics by the U.S. Census Bureau also report that with the population aging and the likelihood that disabilities can increase with age, the growth in the number of people with disabilities is expected to accelerate in the coming decades. See Census Brief (pdf), December 1997.

To have effective communication with the widest audience possible, this Accessibility Guide provides assistance in how to use alternate forms of communication. Disabilities can fall into four basic categories:

- **Blind/Low Vision.** Assistive computer technology for this audience includes screen readers, refreshable Braille displays and screen magnifiers. To assist with accessibility for Blind/Low Vision population, features such as keyboard navigation, scalability of font size, fuzzy searches, alt tags and high contrast between the background and the text are helpful.
- **Deaf/Hard of Hearing.** To assist with accessibility for people with hearing loss, captioning synchronized with multimedia as well as volume control enable accessibility.
- **Mobility.** Assistive computer technology for this audience includes one-handed keyboards, head/mouth sticks and eye tracking. Keyboard navigation as well as voice recognition software may be used by this population to help navigate through a web site.
- **Cognitive and Specific Learning Disabilities.** To appeal to a highly diverse audience, with varying levels of ability, use the following design principles: Simple navigation, consistency in content presentation, clear labels, meaningful content, executive summaries at top of long documents and vocabulary understood by a wide audience.

But the digital divide does not just affect people with disabilities. People without disabilities who have busy hands or eyes, poor lighting or noisy surroundings will find the California portal very user-friendly. People with slow modems, older browsers, or those using alternate internet access devices (e.g., cellular telephones, personal digital assistants, etc.) will also benefit from a highly accessible

web site. This Accessibility Guide will continue to be updated as technology evolves and new tools and resources for accessibility are developed.

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